HE ATE A GHOST

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"HE ATE A GHOST"

A ONE ACT PLAY IN
SEVEN SCENES:

HOMAGE TO:
HENRY DAVID THOREAU,
ROBERT K. DEGER, SAMUEL BECKETT,
AND DR. DAVID THAYER.

JUNE 3, 1983

JUNE 3, 1922

61 = 6+1 = 7

SYNOPSIS:

PLOT:

THIS IS THE STORY OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF A BUM. HE BECOMES HAUNTED OR POSSESSED BY THE GHOST OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU; IS BEFRIENDED BY A SMALL SNORT HAIRED BLACK DOG; PARTICIPATES IN A NUMBER OF ABORTIVE OCCUPATIONS IN THE BOSTON AREA. HE ENDS UP WALKING AROUND WALDEN POND IN CONCORD MASS., AS HE PASSES TO THE NEXT STAGE OF EVOLUTION AND IS NEVER SEEN AGAIN.

CHARACTERS:

(1) THE GHOST OF THE NEW ENGLAND WRITER HENRY DAVID THOREAU [1817-1862], WHO AT THE OPENING OF THE PLAY IS HAUNTING A MAINE POTATO.

(2) "WOODY", [WOODROW K. CRUTCH] A BOSTON STREET BUM, BORN ON JUNE 3, 1922 IN DAYTON OHIO, WHO GRADUATED WITH A BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING FROM PURDUE UNIVERSITY. HE IS THE PROTAGONIST OF THE PLAY AND AN ACCIDENTAL PRACTITIONER OF NOETIC EVOLUTION.

(3) "BLACKIE", A MONGREL DOG THAT

(F) A HUMAN-POWERED ENCLOSED CAR,

(G) A SCALED MOCK-UP OF THE NOW DEFUNCT "CYCLONE" ROLLERCOASTER THAT EXISTED IN THE AMUSEMENT PARK AT REVERE BEACH, MASS.

COSTUMES:

THROUGHOUT THE PLAY, EXCEPT IN THE FINAL SCENE "WOODY" WEARS THREE PAIRS OF PANTS OVER EACH OTHER, AS IS THE CASE WITH HIS JACKETS. HE ALSO WEARS A SKI CAP AT ALL TIMES. ON HIS FEET ARE SANDELS.

SINCE HE BATHES ONLY ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS AND HE LIVES CONTINUOUSLY OUT OF DOORS. HE IS QUITE ODERIFEROUS AND HIS HANDS AND FEET ARE ENCRUSTED WITH GRIME.

HELD CONSTANTLY IN ONE HAND ARE IS SET OF NESTED SHOPPING BAGS WHICH DUE TO THEIR STIFFNESS ACT AS AN AD-HOC EASEL FOR HIS MESSIANIC AND PORTENTOUS SIGNS. EXAMPLES OF THESE SIGNS WOULD BE:

(1) "THE WORLD ENDED ON SEPTEMBER 13, 1977 BUT THEY KEPT IT OUT OF THE NEWSPAPERS";

(2) "THE CATHOLIC CHURCH DOES NOT EXIST".

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
WOODY: "SO YOU WANT TO COME ALONG? WELL HURRY UP "BLACKIE" - "BOSTON BLACKIE" - THAT IS!"	BUT THE DOG IS NOT DISCOURAGED AND FOLLOWS ALONG. WOODY TURNS BACK FOR A MOMENT REALIZING WHAT IS A-FOOT, ADDRESSING THE DOG WITH A SMILE, TURNS AROUND AND MOVES BRISKLY AWAY.		
WOODY: "AT A LYCEUM, NOT LONG SINCE, I FELT THAT THE...." ETC. (MUMBLED) "DAMMIT!!"	AS HE IS MOVING DOWN THE STREET, THE WORDS OF THOREAU'S ESSAY "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE" BEGIN TO ISSUE FROM HIS MOUTH. AFTER MANY THROAT-CLEARINGS AND SPEECH TESTS, HE DISCOVERS THAT WHEN HE NO LONGER HAS ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO SAY, WOODY'S VOICE BOX AUTOMATICALLY BEGINS THE WORD SEQUENCE OF A TEXT HE DOES NOT RECOGNIZE AND IN A MUMBLING VOICE WHICH IS NOT HIS, BOTH THESE CONDITIONS BEGIN TO TROUBLE HIM.		"LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE" AS A KIND OF MUMBLED UNDERTONE THAT FILLS THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THE REST OF WOODY'S DIALOGUE
SCENE TWO:	**TIME:**	**PLACE:**	
	A WEEK LATER, SOMETIME AFTER 10:00 PM AT NIGHT	**IN FRONT OF WHAT USED TO BE THE OLD CORNER BOOK STORE ON BROMFIELD ST. BOSTON**	
	THE SCENE OPENS WITH A TALL BLACK MAN SEATED ON THE SIDEWALK, USING AN OLD PLASTIC MILK CARTON AS A SEAT. THE TEMPERATURE HAS REACHED THE HUMID 80'S, BUT THE MAN IS DRESSED IN A TALL STOVE PIPE HAT AND A LONG BLACK COAT. HE IS SITTING QUITE STILL, BUT	THE SIDEWALK	"CANDY MAN BLUES" IS BEING PLAYED ON A GUITAR

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	IS OBVIOUSLY STRUGGLING TO STAY AWAKE AND NOT FALL OVER. CONTENTED, BLACKIE IS ENSCONCED IN THE MAN'S LAP, WHILE OBSERVING WITH GREAT CURIOSITY WHAT WOODY IS DOING ON THE SIDEWALK. KNEELING ON THE PAVEMENT, WOODY IS ATTEMPTING TO FIX THE VIOLIN HE HAS FOUND LAST WEEK. AROUND HIM IN A STAGED STORAGE OR HOLDING BAG PATTERN ARE HIS SHOPPING, AND SIGNS, VIOLIN TOOLS AND PARTS, AND OFF TO THE RIGHT LINED UP LIKE RUNGS, OF A LADDER ARE "BLACKIE'S MORNING AND EVENING MEALS- A SET OF CAREFULLY CLEANED LARGE WHITE THIGH BONES OBVIOUSLY FROM HORSES. EACH BONE IS LABELLED WITH A DAY OF THE WEEK	VIOLIN PARTS AND TOOLS, BONES, THE SHOPPING BAG AND SIGNS	"CANDY MAN" FADES OUT
WOODY: [IN BETWEEN HIS MUTTERINGS] "HOW THE HELL DOES THAT MUTT KNOW WHAT I'M DOING? HE HAS A STRANGE LOOK IN HIS EYES AS IF HE IS SOMEHOW DISSATISFIED WITH THE NATURE OF HIS EXISTENCE - BUT OF COURSE, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AS AN EXISTENTIALIST DOG".	THE DOG BARKS RIGHT BEFORE WOODY MAKES A MISTAKE IN HIS WORK AND CUTS HIMSELF. WOODY IS AMAZED AT THE PSYCHIC ABILITY AND SENSITIVITY OF HIS NEW FOUND COMPANION, AND SPEAKS TO THE STREET.		DOG BARKING
	THE BLACK MAN WHO HAS NOT SPOKEN FOR ABOUT THE THREE HOURS THAT WOODY AND BLACKIE HAVE BEEN THERE BREAKS HIS SILENCE WITH AN IMPORTUNING REQUEST FOR HELP.		

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
BLACK MAN: "EXCUSE ME SIR. CAN YOU SPARE $2\frac{17}{100}$ FOR MY BREAKFAST, AND WOULD YOU MIND LEAVING SOON, I WANT TO GO TO SLEEP."			
WOODY: "WHY YOU...!!!" "TAKE THAT"!!!	THE PLEA FROM THE BLACK MAN IS TOO MUCH FOR WOODY REMEMBERING THE ECONOMIC IRONY OF HIS OWN SITUATION. HE SHOUTS AT THE BLACK MAN AS HE ATTEMPTS AND SUCCEEDS IN SMASHING THE VIOLIN HE HAS JUST REPAIRED OVER THE MAN'S HEAD		THE SOUND OF WOOD BEING SMASHED AND BROKEN
	WOODY THEN STOMPS OFF DOWN THE STREET LEAVING HIS "FIELD-PACK" TO THE FATES. THE BLACK MAN'S BODY BEGINS TO PITCH AND YAW AND THEN FALLS ABRUPTLY TO THE PAVEMENT APPARENTLY TO SLEEP. BLACKIE SENSING A FORTHCOMING NUTRITIONAL DEARTH, PICKS UP AS MANY BONES AS POSSIBLE IN HIS SMALL JAWS AND RUNS AFTER WOODY.		

SCENE THREE:	TIME:	PLACE	
	A WEEK LATER AT 11:00 AM. IN THE MORNING	ON THE WOODEN WALKWAY OF THE NORTHERN AVENUE BRIDGE, BOS.	
	WOODY IS STANDING WITH HIS BACK TO THE RAILING OF THE NORTHERN AVENUE BRIDGE IN BOSTON.	ON THE BRIDGE WALKWAY	

HE IS IN WHAT LOOKS LIKE A ROTHER UNUSUAL COSTUME. A CROWD HAS GATHERED AROUND H/M BUT IT IS POSSIBLE TO SEE THE COSTUME AS ACTUALLY A HOMEMADE RENDERING OF A LATE 18TH CENTURY PUPPET-THEATRE SUIT FROM CHINA. ON TOP OF HIS HEAD IS A MINATURE STAGE WITH SHADOW-LIKE FIGURES MANIPULATED FROM BELOW. THE REST OF THE THEATRE IS A LONG BLACK CLOTH THAT EXTENDS FROM THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE FLOOR OF THE STAGE AND EVENTUALLY IS DROPED AND GATHERED ABOUT WOODY'S ANKLES.

THE PUPPET-THEATRE SUIT

THE BACKGROUND MUSIC FROM THE FILM "CHINATOWN"

WOODY HAS DISCOVERED BY RESEARCH IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY THAT THE WORDS HE IS INVOLUNTARILY SPEAKING ARE FROM HENRY DAVID THOREAU. SINCE HE CANNOT STOP THEM HE REASONS THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO CAPITALIZE ON THE SITUATION. HIS SOLUTION IS TO BECOME A PUPPET-SHOWMAN ILLUSTRATING CERTAIN INCIDENTS FROM "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE" SUCH AS: "THE RUSH TO CALIFORNIA", KOSSUTH AND THE HINDU COSMOLOGY, "THE PRIVATE STATE" OR "UNCONSCIOUS POLITICS".

BLACKIE'S BODY STRADLES THE PITCHED ROOF OF THE THEATRE SUIT AS HE THE

CHESHIRE CAT.
AROUND HIS NECK IS A SIGN WHICH READS: "THE THOR-WATER THEATRE": WOODROW K. CRUTCH, PROPRIETOR AND PUPPETIER."
UNDER THE MAIN SIGN HANGS A CHAIN OF SMALLER SIGNS WITH REFERENCES TO HIS SHOPPING BAG SIGNS.
BLACKIE KEEPS THE ATTENTION OF PEOPLE BETWEEN "SCENES" BY BARKING.

A SET OF CHAIN-LIKE SIGNS AROUND BLACKIE'S NECK

BLACKIE:
(INTERMITTENT BARKING)

WOODY:
DIALOGUE DERIVED FROM "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE"

SUDDENLY AND ALMOST UNNOTICED BY THE AUDIENCE AT FIRST, SOMEONE IS COMING DOWN THE BOARDWALK OF THE BRIDGE ON AN ELABORATE BICYCLE.
THE PERSON RIDING THE BICYCLE IS SO ABSORBED IN THE FEELING OF PRIDE IN THE VARIOUS GADGETS THAT ADORN THE BICYCLE THAT HE FAILS TO LOOK WHERE HE IS GOING
BUT THE AUDIENCE WITH A GASP DOES LOOK WHERE THE RIDER IS GOING, AND QUICKLY RETREATS TO ALLOW THE RIDER TO PENETRATE THE SPACE.
BECAUSE WOODY'S HEAD IS SURROUNDED BY CLOTH HE DOES NOT SEE THE CYCLIST NOR THE FRONT WHEEL THAT HITS HIM RIGHT ON HIS LEGS AT THE KNEE HEIGHT.
AT THE IMPACT WOODY IN THE COSTUME, THE DOG ON THE ROOF AND THE WHOLE

AUDIENCE:
[AS A GROUP]
"OH NO!"

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	SHEBANG IS UPENDED OVER THE GUARD RAIL AND OFF THE BRIDGE.		
WOODY: "HELP! HELP! I'M DROWING"	DOWN IN THE WATER WOODY IS SCREAMING AND THRASHING ABOUT. THE CROWD ON THE BRIDGE REMAINS MOTIONLESS AND SILENT HYPNOTIZED BY THE SCENE. THE CYCLIST PICKS HIMSELF UP ADJUSTS A FEW BENT SHINY GEEGAWS ON HIS BIKE, MOUNTS UP AND THEN PEDDLES OFF WITH A LOOK ON HIS FACE THAT IS A COMBINATION OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND MILD AMUSEMENT. THE DOG SNAPS AT THE SINKING BODY OF WOODY NOW PARTIALLY FREE FROM THE RESTRAINTS OF THE THEATRICAL SUIT, AND DRAGS IT TO A NEARBY BOAT. SOMEONE PULLS WOODY ON BOARD.		

SCENE FOUR:	TIME	PLACE:	
	A WEEK LATER AT 2:00 PM IN THE AFTERNOON OF A SUNNY DAY	AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE NORTHERN AVE. BRIDGE AT 64 SLEEPER STREET	
	WOODY IS SEEN PACING BACK AND FORTH ON THE DECK OF THE LIGHTER PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON A GIGANTIC STEERABLE KITE-SYSTEM. HE IS NOW WORKING AT FEVER HEAT BUT IS STILL "MUTTERING"	THE DECK OF A LIGHTER NUMBER 95 OWNED BY THE MCKIE COMPANY: IT HAS A HUGE CRANE AND HOUSING THAT RESEMBLES	LILTING SEA-CHANTIES ARE HEARD BEING PLAYED ON A DULCIMAR

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
WOODY: "I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, THIS TOWN - OR AMERICA ITSELF. PERHAPS IN AN EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT I WILL BE ABLE TO SHAKE OFF THOREAU'S GHOST AND GO BACK TO MY REGULAR LINE OF WORK."	BLACKIE'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS PROJECT SEEMS BOUNDLESS UNTIL THE IMAGE OF WHAT THE DOG IS BARKING AT COMES INTO VIEW. SITTING ON THE FLAT DECK OF THE SEA-KITE'S WATER-FLOAT TRACTION SYSTEM, IS A SIXTY-FOOT HIGH REPLICA OF THE TROJAN HORSE MADE FAMOUS BY VIRGIL IN THE EPIC POEM THE AENEID.	A TWO FAMILY HOUSE BUILT BY "SMOKEY STOVER" A GIANT STEERABLE KITE AND BOAT A TROJAN HORSE MADE OF NEW ENGLAND PINE.	
	BLACKIE'S ENDLESS BARKING AT THE WOODEN HORSE ATTRACTS A SMART-ALEC KID WHO HAS JUST PURCHASED QUAHOGS AT THE NEPTUNE FISH STORE NEARBY. HE USES ONE OF THE QUAHOGS TO ATTRACT WOODY'S ATTENTION BY THROWING IT AT HIM.		
WOODY: "OW! - WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT? THE KID "IS THAT A 'SEA-HORSE?' WOODY: NO YOU SMART-ALEC KID! IT IS MY PROPOSAL FOR A SYMBOL	HIT, WOODY LOOKS UP FROM HIS WORK OF VARNISHING THE HORSE THE KID MOCKS HIM. WOODY COUNTERS HIS REMARK.		

FOR BOSTON WHICH I PLAN TO LEAVE ON ONE OF THE HARBOR ISLANDS (SPECTACLE THAT IS!) ON MY WAY INTO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN WITH WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS TO HAVE IT TOWED INTO THE HARBOR SHORE AND MOUNTED ON TOP OF THE GOVERNMENT CENTER SUBWAY STATION RIGHT BY CITY HALL"

THE IMAGE OF THE HORSE AND THE LENGTHY EXPLANATION PROVE TOO MUCH FOR THE KID WHO BEGINS LAUGHING IN PAROXYSMAL FITS. WHEN HIS LAUGHTER BEGINS TO SUBSIDE, THE KID ADDS A LEADING QUESTION.

THE KID:

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO GET THAT THING UNDER THE BRIDGE?

WOODY'S ASTONISHMENT AT THIS QUESTION CREATES AN UNGUARDED MOMENT IN WOODY'S BEHAVIOR JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR THE KID TO TAKE A LONG DRAG ON HIS CAMEL CIGARETTE AND FLICK IT AT THE FRESH VARNISH. THE HORSE GOES UP IN FLAMES LIKE AN ANCIENT FUNERAL PYRE.

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	A CROWD GATHERS AND SOMEONE CALLS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. WOODY AND BLACKIE SIT QUIETLY AT THE EDGE OF THE DOCK WATCHING THE FIREMEN PUSH THE FLAMING HORSE INTO THE WATER WITH LONG POLES. THE FLAMES ARE EXTINGUISHED WITH A HISSAS THE HORSE SUBMERGES; THE LIGHTER'S CRANE IS ACTIVATED TO LIFT THE NOW CHARRED CARCASS INTO THE AIR AND ONTO A GARBAGE BARGE. THE BRIDGE IS NOW OPENED TO LET THE BARGE AND ITS UNUSUAL CONTENTS THROUGH.		
WOODY: "I'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE"! "COME ON BLACKIE"!	QUICKLY WOODY TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION AND LAUNCHES HIS KITE BOAT. HE SHOUTS TO BLACKIE WHO HOPS ABOARD, AND AMID CHEERS, JEERS AND LAUGHTER, WOODY, BLACKIE AND "THE HOMAGE TO DR. THAYER" MOVES OUT INTO OPEN WATERS.		
SCENE FIVE:	**TIME**	**PLACE**	
	9:00 P.M THE SAME DAY	OUT IN BOSTON HARBOR	
	WOODY AND BLACKIE ARE NOW UNDER "FULL SAIL", BUT THE STEERING MECHANISM ON THE KITE-BOAT		THE NASH RAMBLER SONG "BEEP BEEP" BY THE PLAYMATES VERY FAINT

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	DOES NOT WORK VERY WELL. IN FACT THEY HAVE BEEN GOING IN LARGE CIRCLES FOR HOURS, PASSING AND RE PASSING MANY OF BOSTON'S HARBOR ISLANDS.	THE KITE-BOAT UNDER FULL SAIL AND THE HARBOR ISLANDS	
WOODY: "I WISH I HAD BROUGHT SOME FOOD"..!	IT IS NOW FAIRLY DARK AND WOODY EXPRESSES HIS GROWING HUNGER.		
	AS IF HE UNDERSTOOD WOODY'S WORDS, BLACKIE DROPS HIS LAST BONE AT THE FEET OF HIS MASTER.		
WOODY: "THANKS POOCH, BUT MY TEETH ARE NOT THAT GOOD", "I THINK WE HAD BETTER HEAD FOR ONE ONE OF THOSE ISLANDS BEFORE WE GET HIT BY A TANKER IN THE DARK"!	WOODY THANKS THE DOG AND THINKS THAT THEY SHOULD FIND SHELTER SOON.		MUSIC FADES TO SILENCE
	THEY EASE THEIR CONTRAPTION UP ON TO THE DESERTED BEACH OF THE NEAREST ISLAND. EVEN IN WHAT LITTLE LIGHT REMAINS, WOODY RECOGNIZES THE BEACH TO BELONG TO THOMPSON'S ISLAND. HE PULLS IN THE BIG KITE AND SECURES IT TO A PIECE OF A WRECKED SHIP. HE IS SO DROWSY	THOMPSON'S ISLAND	

	THAT HE LIES RIGHT DOWN ON THE SAND WITHOUT FURTHER PREPARATIONS, WITH BLACKIE BESIDE HIM.		
WOODY: "BLACKIE, I DON'T KNOW ALL OF IT YET BUT A PATTERN IS BEGINNING TO FORM. I AM DESTINED TO DO SOMETHING BUT WHAT? I ONLY HOPE THOREAU'S "MUTTERINGS" STOP SOON, I'M BEING DRIVEN CRAZY, BUT, OF COURSE, GHOSTS DON'T HAVE TO SLEEP. TOMORROW WE'LL HEAD FOR EUROPE... "READ NOT THE TIMES; READ THE ETERNITIES..."	BEFORE WOODY FALLS ASLEEP [A VERY TROUBLED SLEEP] HE SAYS HIS FINAL VOLUNTARY WORDS FOR THE DAY, ADDRESSED TO BLACKIE.		
SCENE SIX:	TIME:	PLACE:	
	IT IS TWO WEEKS LATER AT 1:00 PM IN THE AFTERNOON	THOMPSON'S ISLAND	
	WOODY HAS NOT LEFT THE BEACH. IN FACT HE HAS FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT CROSSING THE ATLANTIC OCEAN BY KITE-BOAT. THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE BOAT ARE BEING USED TO BUILD A HUMAN-POWERED AND FREE ENERGY CAR. HE IS WORKING ON ESSENTIALLY A PEDAL CAR FOR FOUR OR TWO PERSONS.		"EINSTEIN ON THE BEACH" BY PHILIP GLASS BECOMING RANDOMLY LOUD AND SOFT AS THE OPERA PROCEEDS

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	IT IS NOT STREAMLINED OR "MODERNE" LOOKING. QUITE THE REVERSE IS TRUE. IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, WITH A MODEL OF THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZEN ON TOP. BUILT-IN WET-PLATE CAMERAS, CRYSTAL RADIO SETS AND VELUET SIDE CURTAINS COMPLETE THE IMAGE. THE DRIVING SYSTEM IS HYDRAULIC WITH ELECTRIC GENERATORS ON THE WHEELS AND PHOTO-VOLTAIC CELLS ON THE ROOF. PLEASENT SOUNDS ARE PROVIDED BY IN BOARD AEOLIAN HARPS.		
WOODY: "I FEEL THE WHOLE THING HAS TO DO WITH THE IDEAS THOREAU WAS GETTING AT. HE SUMMED UP IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THE SENSIBILITY WE NOW FEEL AS WE APPROACH THE BRINK OF A HISTORICAL CHANGE IN THE WORLD AS VAST OR GREATER THAN THAT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. UTOPIA, EVOLUTION, RELIGION, SCIENCE AND ART WILL BE SUBSUMED. I HAVE FIGURED OUT THAT THE ANSWER FOR ME LIES SOMEWHERE	DURING THE PAST TWO WEEKS WOODY GOT TO KNOW VARIOUS CHILDREN WHO CAME REPEATEDLY TO THE ISLAND. THEY SMUGGLE HIM FOOD AND THE PARTS HE NEEDS TO COMPLETE THE CAR. SEVERAL KIDS ARE GATHERED BY THE WORK SITE ASKING HIM THE NOW "NORMAL" QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS CONDITION AND HIS CAR. WOODY ADDRESSES THEM.		

NEAR WALDEN POND. THOREAU WOULD HAVE APPROVED, I'M SURE, OF THE WAY I WANT TO GET TO HIS "TERRITORY".

BLACKIE COMES BACK AFTER HIS DAILY FORAGE INTO THE BUSHES AND ALONG THE SHORE. IN HIS MOUTH IS A STRANGE OBJECT. IT LOOKS LIKE A BROKEN PIECE OF BALUSTER. IT IS PAINTED CREAM AND CHINESE RED AND LOOKS AS IF IT WAS PAINTED MANY TIMES.
WOODY QUESTIONS BLACKIE.

WOODY:
"WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THERE BLACKIE"?

BLACKIE DROPS IT AND STANDS BACK. WOODY PICKS ITS UP AND COMMENTS.

WOODY:
"WELL THIS IS STRANGE! BUT A LOT OF JUNK COMES UP FROM THE OCEAN!"

THE EYES OF ONE OF THE OLDER KIDS IN THE CROWD SUDDENLY BRIGHTENS. AND EXCLAIMS HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRAP.

THE OLDER KID:
"I KNOW WHAT THAT IS. IT'S A PIECE OF THE ENTRANCE WAY TO THE OLD ROLLER-COASTER, CALLED THE CYCLONE, AT REVERE BEACH THAT THEY TORE DOWN IN 1973. I REMEMBER RIDING ON IT JUST BEFORE IT WAS CONDEMNED. I WAS JUST A LITTLE KID

BEING TAKEN FOR A RIDE BY MY OLDER BROTHER. DURING THE RIDE ~~I~~ THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE. I PRAYED TO GOD TO TURN ME INTO A BIRD SO THAT I COULD FLY AWAY. THIS PIECE MUST HAVE BEEN THROWN INTO THE OCEAN AT REVERE BEACH AND JUST FLOATED HERE."

WOODY IS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED WITH THE KID'S RECOLLECTIONS.

WOODY:

"THAT'S AN INTERESTING STORY. I'LL KEEP THIS FOR LUCK"

WOODY THROWS THE WOOD SCRAP INTO THE BACK OF THE CAR AND STARTS TO PUSH THE CAR FORWARD ALONG THE SAND.

WOODY:

"I'M GOING TO NEED LUCK WHERE I'M GOING TO DRIVE THIS CAR!"

WITH THE KIDS TO HELP PUSH WOODY'S CAR IS SOON NEAR THE BOAT LANDING.
AT FIRST THE BOAT CAPTAIN RAISES HIS HAND SENSING WHAT'S COMING AND OFFERS AN INSTINCTIVE OBJECTION.

THE BOAT CAPTAIN'S ASSISTANT TURNS TO THE CAPTAIN AND ASKS TO LET WOODY ON BOARD.

THE CAPTAIN'S ASSISTANT:

"LET HIM ON. THEY HAVE BEEN

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
TRYING TO GET RID OF HIM FOR SOME TIME WITHOUT CALLING THE POLICE, HE WANTS TO GO NOW".			
THE CAPTAIN "BUT!!... THAT CAR?"	THE CAPTAIN IS STILL HESITANT ABOUT LETTING WOODY AND HIS CAR ON.		
THE CAPTAIN: "OK! OK!"	THE KIDS HEAR THIS AND TOGETHER THEY LIFT THE CAR INTO THE AIR SNOWING HOW LIGHT IT IS. THIS GESTURE CONVINCES THE CAPTAIN SO HE FINALLY GIVES IN.		
	AT THIS THE KIDS ARE OFF AND RUNNING WITH THE CAR AND MOVE IT ACROSS THE STERN. WHEN THEY REACH KELLEY'S LANDING THE KIDS PAY FOR WOODY AND CARRY THE CAR UP THE RAMP TO THE STREET. THERE ARE QUICK GOODBYES, AND BLACKIE JUMPS IN AND THEY ARE DRIVING. THROUGH THE STREETS OF SOUTH BOSTON THE GOING IS SLOW AND SOME TEENAGE KIDS THROW STONES AT THE CAR. FINALLY THEY REACH THE NORTHERN AVE. BRIDGE, REMEMBERING WHAT HAPPENED THERE. THE CAR TURNS RAPIDLY ONTO ATLANTIC AVE., AND PROCEEDS ONTO THE UP RAMP TO THE FITZGERALD EXPRESSWAY. SO FAR THE CAR'S SPEED HAS BEEN WELL BELOW THAT OF THE MOTOR VEHICLES AROUND IT. BUT NOW WOODY FEELS AN UNSUSPECTED		

WOODY:
"I CAN GO AS FAST AS I WANT".

SURGE OF ENERGY - GREATER THAN BEFORE. WOODY COMMENTS ON THIS

EVEN THE DOG SENSES THE NEW POWER AS HE STICKS HIS HEAD OUT OF THE WINDOW TO RECEIVE THE INTOXICATION OF THE BREEZE.
THE VELOCITY MOUNTS TO 30 MPH, 37, 40, 45, TO 50 MPH. WOODY MUST HOLD BACK FROM PEDALLING TO REALIZE CONTROL. SWIFTLY THEY GO DOWN STORROW DRIVE, OVER THE ELIOT BRIDGE, ACROSS MT. AUBURN STREET TO FRESH POND, UP ROUTE 2 TOWARD CONCORD.

STRANGER IN CAR:
"DOES IT RUN ON ELECTRICITY?"

WOODY:
"NO"!
"SPIRIT POWER!"

STRANGER IN CAR:
OH!
"YOU MEAN PURE ALCOHOL!"

WOODY:
"NO A REAL SPIRIT."

AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT SOMEONE IN ANOTHER CAR THAT PULLED ALONGSIDE WOODY ASKS ABOUT THE SOURCE OF ENERGY. WOODY ANSWERS WITH A SMILE AND DESTROYS A PUN.

WOODY AT THE END OF HIS ANSWER, PULLS AWAY FIRST FROM THE LIGHT CHANGE.

AS WOODY NEARS THE LAKE WALDEN AREA THE CAR SEEMS TO BE OUT OF CONTROL. AT THE APPROACH AND THE PARKING AREA OF THE LAKE, WOODY AND BLACKIE ARE LITERALLY SCREAMING WITH TERROR AS THE

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	CAR TAKES OFF LIKE A ROCKET AND DIVES INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE.		
	DOWN UNDER THE WATER WOODY AND BLACKIE STRUGGLE TO GET OUT OF THE CAR BEFORE THEY DROWN. FINALLY THEY REACH THE SURFACE OF THE LAKE. WOODY BEGINS THRASHING ABOUT. THE FRAGMENT OF THE ROLLER COASTER MOVES OUT OF THE CAR WINDOW AND INSTEAD OF FLOATING UP IT SINKS OUT OF SIGHT TO THE BOTTOM. AGAIN BLACKIE HELPS WOODY REACH THE SHORE.		THE MUSIC FADES TO SILENCE
SCENE SEVEN	**TIME:**	**PLACE:**	
	A WEEK LATER ON THURSDAY AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE MORNING.	**THE SITE OF THOREAUS CABIN AT LAKE WALDEN**	
"WOODY" [THE MUTTERINGS SUBSIDE]	WOODY HAS NOTICED THAT WHEN HE GETS VERY NEAR OR INTO THE WATER OF LAKE WALDEN HIS "MUTTERINGS" SUBSIDE. HE THEREFORE SPENDS MOST OF HIS TIME WALKING AROUND THE LAKE ON THE FOOT PATH FOR PURE RELIEF OF NOT TO SPEAK ANYTHING. EVEN THE MONSTROUS MOSQUITOES OF THE AREA DO NOT DETER HIM FROM HIS SELF-APPOINTED ROUNDS. AT NIGHT HE SLEEPS UNDISTURBED ON THE SITE OF THOREAU'S CABIN. AS HE WALKS IN CIRCLES, WOODY FEELS HE IS AT THE CLIMAX OF HIS PRESENT CONDITION. FASTER AND FASTER HE WALKS AROUND THE LAKE.		"IN C" BY TERRY RILEY

EVEN BLACKIE IS HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING UP WITH HIM. HE WILL SOMETIMES SIT IN ONE SPOT RESTING AND WAITING FOR WOODY TO RETURN TO HIM.

MUSIC FADES TO SILENCE

BY 10:30 WOODY HAS MADE 75 CIRCUITS OF THE LAKE AND BY NOON 300. HE IS NOW NOTHING BUT A BLUR TO THE EYES OF A FEW TOURISTS IN THE AREA. WHILE MOVING WOODY IS MEDITATING ON THE NAME THOREAU.

THE BACKGROUND MUSIC TO THE FILM "THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL" COMPOSED BY BERNARD HERRMANN

WOODY: [THINKING OUT LOUD] "THOREAU IS MADE UP OF TWO WORDS. THOR, THE NORSE GOD OF THUNDER AND THIS IS THURSDAY OR "THOR'S DAY. "EAU" IS FRENCH FOR WATER - THAT I ALREADY KNOW".

JUST THEN A SUMMER SHOWER STARTS ACCOMPANIED BY LIGHTNING FROM A DISTANCE. THE THUNDER IS MUFFLED AT FIRST BUT SOON GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER UNTIL IT BEGINS TO DEAFEN WOODY WHO STOPS IN HIS TRACKS. JUST WHEN THE SOUND OF THE LIGHTNING BOLTS DISCHARGING SEEMS UNBEARABLE, A SWIFT SILENT BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRIKES DEEP INTO THE WATERS OF THE LAKE.

MUSIC FADES TO SILENCE

"THE PRELUDE TO ACT ONE OF LOHENGRIN" BY RICHARD WAGNER

WOODY: "THAT'S IT, LIGHTNING AND WATER - FIRE AND WATER. THE COMBINATION THAT THE ALCHEMISTS HAVE DREAMED OF!"

WOODY IS ECSTATIC CRYING OUT!

DIALOGUE	ACTION	SET	MUSIC
	ON AN IMPULSE WOODY DIVES INTO THE WATER IN A PERFECT ARCH AND EASILY REACHES A SPOT WAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAKE JUST WHERE THE LAST BOLT STRUCK. UPON REACHING THE WATER HE SINKS LIKE A STONE HEAD FIRST AND FEELS HIMSELF DROWNING.		
WOODY "HELP! HELP!"			
	THEN UNDERNEATH HIM HE FEELS SOMETHING SUPPORT HIS WEIGHT THAT IS RISING IN THE WATER. IT RIGHTS HIM IN THE WATER AND MOVES HIS BODY STEADILY UPWARD.		
	FROM THE SHORE SOME PEOPLE WATCH AN EXACT REPLICA OF THE CYCLONE ROLLER COASTER RISE SLOWLY AND MAJESTICALLY OUT OF THE LAKE WITH A MAN (COMPLETELY NUDE) STANDING ON THE HIGHEST HILL OF THE STRUCTURE WITH BOTH HIS ARMS HELD UPWARD OVER HIS HEAD IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GESTURE OF THE KA. THE TIPS OF HIS FINGERS RECEIVE LIGHTNING BOLT AFTER BOLT, AS IF HIS ARMS ARE ELECTRODES. WOODY BEGINS TO GLOW. THE LIGHT FROM HIS BODY BECOMES SO INTENSE THAT THE EYES OF BLACKIE, WHO IS OBSERVING INTENTLY WHAT IS HAPPENING ON THE SHORE, FAIL. BLACKIE BECOMES TOTALLY BLIND. BUT BEFORE THAT HAPPENS AN EXPRESSION OF ECSTACY COMES OVER THE DOG'S FACE THAT MIGHT HAVE SEEMED TO ANYONE WHO WAS WATCHING, ALMOST HUMAN.		
	THE LIGHTNING CONTINUES WITH SUCH FREQUENCY AND VIOLENCE THAT THE ROLLER-COASTER LITERALLY EXPLODES INTO A CLOUD OF SHARD SPLINTERS THAT ARE CARRIED SWIFTLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS LIKE DARTS. A SINGLE SPLINTER PENETRATES BLACKIE'S BODY, WHO HAS BEGUN TO WANDER OFF, KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.		THE MUSIC FADES TO SILENCE
	THE WHOLE VISION IS OVER IN A MATTER OF SECONDS. EVERYTHING IS GONE OF THE ROLLER-COASTER AND WOODY. THE AMAZED BYSTANDERS RUSH FORWARD AROUND THE FOOT PATH FOR A CLOSER LOOK, BUT FIND ONLY A DEAD BLACK DOG.		

APPENDIX

IMAGERY TO BE USED FOR DESIGNING THE SETS OF THE VARIOUS SCENES AND THE THEATRE, AND THE COMPLETE TEXT OF "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE", AND THE ORGIN THE MAIN CHARACTER.

TITLE: "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE"
AUTHOR: HENRY DAVID THOREAU
PUBLISHED BY: THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY OCTOBER 1863
[TEXT REPRODUCED FROM: THOREAU:
WALDEN AND OTHER WRITINGS
EDITED BY: JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH
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PAGES: 355-373

At a Lyceum, not long since, I felt that the lecturer had chosen a theme too foreign to himself, and so failed to interest me as much as he might have done. He described things not in or near to his heart, but toward his extremities and superficies. There was, in this sense, no truly central or centralizing thought in the lecture. I would have had him deal with privatest experience, as the poet does. The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what *I thought*, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me, as if he were acquainted with the tool. Commonly, if men want anything of me, it is only to know how many acres I make of their land—since I am a surveyor—or, at most, what trivial news I have burdened myself with. They never will go to law for my meat; they prefer the shell. A man once came a considerable distance to ask me to lecture on Slavery; but on conversing with him, I found that he and his clique expected seven eighths of the lecture to be theirs, and only one eighth mine; so I declined. I take it for granted, when I am invited to lecture anywhere—for I have had a little experience in that business—that there is a desire to hear what *I think* on some subject, though I may be the greatest fool in the country, and not that I should say pleasant things merely, or such as the audience will assent to; and I resolve, accordingly, that I will give them a strong dose of myself. They have sent for me, and engaged to pay for me, and I am determined that they shall have me, though I bore them beyond all precedent.

So now I would say something similar to you, my readers. Since *you* are my readers, and I have not been much of a traveler, I will not talk about people a thousand miles off, but come as near home as I can. As the time is short, I will leave out all the flattery, and retain all the criticism.

Let us consider the way in which we spend our lives.

This world is a place of business. What an infinite bustle! I am awaked almost every night by the panting of the locomotive. It interrupts my dreams. There is no sabbath. It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once. It is nothing but work, work, work. I cannot easily buy a blank-book to write thoughts in; they are commonly ruled for dollars and cents. An Irishman, seeing me making a minute in the fields, took it for granted that I was calculating my wages. If a man was tossed out of a window when an infant, and so made a cripple for life, or scared out of his wits by the Indians, it is regretted chiefly because he was thus incapacitated for—business! I think that there is nothing, not even crime, more opposed to poetry, to philosophy, ay, to life itself, than this incessant business.

There is a coarse and boisterous money-making fellow in the outskirts of our town, who is going to build a bank-wall under the hill along the edge of his meadow. The powers have put this into his head to keep him out of mischief, and he wishes me to spend three weeks digging there with him. The result will be that he will perhaps get some more money to hoard, and leave for his heirs to spend foolishly. If I do this, most will commend me as an industrious and hard-working man; but if I choose to devote myself to certain labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they may be inclined to look on me as an idler. Nevertheless, as I do not need the police of meaningless labor to regulate me, and do not see anything absolutely praiseworthy in this fellow's undertaking any more than in many an enterprise of our own or foreign governments, however amusing it may be to him or them, I prefer to finish my education at a different school.

If a man walk in the woods for love of them half of each day, he is in danger of being regarded as a loafer; but if he spends his whole day as a speculator, shearing off those woods and making earth bald before her time, he is esteemed an industrious and enterprising citizen. As if a town had no interest in its forests but to cut them down!

Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now. For instance: just after sunrise, one summer morning, I noticed one of my neighbors walking beside his team, which was slowly drawing a heavy hewn stone swung under the axle, surrounded by an atmosphere of industry—his day's work begun, his brow commenced to sweat—a reproach to all sluggards and idlers—pausing abreast the shoulders of his oxen, and half turning round with a flourish of his merciful whip, while they gained their length on him. And I thought, Such is the labor which the American Congress exists to protect—honest, manly toil—honest as the day is long—that makes his bread taste sweet, and keeps society sweet—which all men respect and have consecrated; one of the sacred band, doing the needful but irksome drudgery. Indeed, I felt a slight reproach, because I observed this from a window, and was not abroad and stirring about a similar business. The day went by, and at evening I passed the yard of another neighbor, who keeps many servants, and spends much money foolishly, while he adds nothing to the common stock, and there I saw the stone of the morning lying beside a whimsical structure intended to adorn this Lord Timothy Dexter's premises, and the dignity forthwith departed from the teamster's labor, in my eyes. In my opinion, the sun was made to light worthier toil than this. I may add that his employer has since run off, in debt to a good part of the town, and, after passing through Chancery, has settled somewhere else, there to become once more a patron of the arts.

The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money *merely* is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. If you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly. Those services which the community will most readily pay for, it is most disagreeable to render. You are paid for being something less than a man. The state does not commonly reward a genius any more wisely. Even the poet laureate would rather not have to celebrate the accidents of royalty. He must be bribed with a pipe of wine; and perhaps another poet is called away from his muse to gauge that very pipe. As for my own business, even that kind of surveying which I could do with most satisfaction my employers do not want. They would prefer that I should do my work coarsely and not too well, ay, not well enough. When I

Perhaps I am more than usually jealous with respect to my freedom. I feel that my connection with and obligation to society are still very slight and transient. Those slight labors which afford me a livelihood, and by which it is allowed that I am to some extent serviceable to my contemporaries, are as yet commonly a pleasure to me, and I am not often reminded that they are a necessity. So far I am successful. But I foresee that if my wants should be much increased, the labor required to supply them would become a drudgery. If I should sell both my forenoons and afternoons to society, as most appear to do, I am sure that for me there would be nothing left worth living for. I trust that I shall never thus sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. I wish to suggest that a man may be very industrious, and yet not spend his time well. There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living. All great enterprises are self-supporting. The poet, for instance, must sustain his body by his poetry, as a steam planing-mill feeds its boilers with the shavings it makes. You must get your living by loving. But as it is said of the merchants that ninety-seven in a hundred fail, so the life of men generally, tried by this standard, is a failure, and bankruptcy may be surely prophesied.

Merely to come into the world the heir of a fortune is not to be born, but to be stillborn, rather. To be supported by the charity of friends, or a government pension—provided you continue to breathe—by whatever fine synonyms you describe these relations, is to go into the almshouse. On Sundays the poor debtor goes to church to take an account of stock, and finds, of course, that his outgoes have been greater than his income. In the Catholic Church, especially, they go into chancery, make a clean confession, give up all, and think to start again. Thus men will lie on their backs, talking about the fall of man, and never make an effort to get up.

As for the comparative demand which men make on life, it is an important difference between two, that the one is satisfied with a level success, that his marks can all be hit by point-blank shots, but the other, however low and unsuccessful his life may be, constantly elevates his aim, though at a very slight angle to the horizon. I should much observe that there are different ways of surveying, my employer commonly asks which will give him the most land, not which is most correct. I once invented a rule for measuring cordwood, and tried to introduce it in Boston; but the measurer there told me that the sellers did not wish to have their wood measured correctly—that he was already too accurate for them, and therefore they commonly got their wood measured in Charlestown before crossing the bridge.

The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get "a good job," but to perform well a certain work; and, even in a pecuniary sense, it would be economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, or even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.

It is remarkable that there are few men so well employed, so much to their minds, but that a little money or fame would commonly buy them off from their present pursuit. I see advertisements for *active* young men, as if activity were the whole of a young man's capital. Yet I have been surprised when one has with confidence proposed to me, a grown man, to embark in some enterprise of his, as if I had absolutely nothing to do, my life having been a complete failure hitherto. What a doubtful compliment this to pay me! As if he had met me halfway across the ocean beating up against the wind, but bound nowhere, and proposed to me to go along with him! If I did, what do you think the underwriters would say? No, no! I am not without employment at this stage of the voyage. To tell the truth, I saw an advertisement for able-bodied seamen, when I was a boy, sauntering in my native port, and as soon as I came of age I embarked.

The community has no bribe that will tempt a wise man. You may raise money enough to tunnel a mountain, but you cannot raise money enough to hire a man who is minding *his own* business. An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not. The inefficient offer their inefficiency to the highest bidder, and are forever expecting to be put into office. One would suppose that they were rarely disappointed.

rather be the last man, though, as the Orientals say, "Greatness doth not approach him who is forever looking down; and all those who are looking high are growing poor."

It is remarkable that there is little or nothing to be remembered written on the subject of getting a living; how to make getting a living not merely honest and honorable, but altogether inviting and glorious; for if *getting* a living is not so, then living is not. One would think, from looking at literature, that this question had never disturbed a solitary individual's musings. Is it that men are too much disgusted with their experience to speak of it? The lesson of value which money teaches, which the Author of the Universe has taken so much pains to teach us, we are inclined to skip altogether. As for the means of living, it is wonderful how indifferent men of all classes are about it, even reformers, so called—whether they inherit, or earn, or steal it. I think that Society has done nothing for us in this respect, or at least has undone what she has done. Cold and hunger seem more friendly to my nature than those methods which men have adopted and advise to ward them off.

The title *wise* is, for the most part, falsely applied. How can one be a wise man, if he does not know any better how to live than other men?—if he is only more cunning and intellectually subtle? Does Wisdom work in a treadmill? or does she teach how to succeed *by her example*? Is there any such thing as wisdom not applied to life? Is she merely the miller who grinds the finest logic? It is pertinent to ask if Plato got his *living* in a better way or more successfully than his contemporaries—or did he succumb to the difficulties of life like other men? Did he seem to prevail over some of them merely by indifference, or by assuming grand airs? or find it easier to live, because his aunt remembered him in her will? The ways in which most men get their living, that is, live, are mere makeshifts, and a shirking of the real business of life—chiefly because they do not know, but partly because they do not mean, any better.

The rush to California, for instance, and the attitude, not merely of merchants, but of philosophers and prophets, so called, in relation to it, reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to live by luck, and so get the means of commanding the labor of others less

lucky, without contributing any value to society! And that is called enterprise! I know of no more startling development of the immorality of trade, and all the common modes of getting a living. The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball. The hog that gets his living by rooting, stirring up the soil so, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay *such* a price for it. Even Mahomet knew that God did not make this world in jest. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. The world's raffle! A subsistence in the domains of Nature a thing to be raffled for! What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be, that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And have all the precepts in all the Bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the human race only on improved muck-rake? Is this the ground on which Orientals and Occidentals meet? Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted—and He would, perchance, reward us with lumps of gold?

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former. It is one of the most extensive systems of counterfeiting that the world has seen. I did not know that mankind was suffering for want of gold. I have seen a little of it. I know that it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of gold will gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom.

The gold digger in the ravines of the mountains is as much a gambler as his fellow in the saloons of San Francisco. What difference does it make whether you shake dirt or shake dice? If you win, society is the loser. The gold digger is the enemy of the honest laborer, whatever checks and compensations there may be. It is not enough to tell me that you worked hard to get your gold. So does the Devil work hard. The way of transgressors may be hard in many respects. The humblest observer who goes to the mines sees and says that gold digging is of the character of a lottery; the gold thus obtained is not the same thing with the wages of honest toil. But, practically, he forgets what he has seen, for he has seen only the fact, not the principle, and goes into trade there, that is, buys a ticket in what commonly proves another lottery, where the fact is not so obvious.

After reading Howitt's account of the Australian gold diggings one evening, I had in my mind's eye, all night, the numerous valleys, with their streams, all cut up with foul pits, from ten to one hundred feet deep, and half a dozen feet across, as close as they can be dug, and partly filled with water—the locality to which men furiously rush to probe for their fortunes—uncertain where they shall break ground—not knowing but the gold is under their camp itself—sometimes digging one hundred and sixty feet before they strike the vein, or then missing it by a foot—turned into demons, and regardless of each others' rights, in their thirst for riches—whole valleys, for thirty miles, suddenly honeycombed by the pits of the miners, so that even hundreds are drowned in them—standing in water, and covered with mud and clay, they work night and day, dying of exposure and disease. Having read this, and partly forgotten it, I was thinking, accidentally, of my own unsatisfactory life, doing as others do; and with that vision of the diggings still before me, I asked myself why *I* might not be washing some gold daily, though it were only the finest particles—why *I* might not sink a shaft down to the gold within me, and work that mine. *There* is a Ballarat, a Bendigo for you—what though it were a sulky-gully? At any rate, I might pursue some path, however solitary and narrow and crooked, in which I could walk with love and reverence. Wherever a man separates from the multitude, and goes his own way in this mood, there indeed is a fork in the road, though ordinary travelers may see only a gap in the paling. His solitary path across lots will turn out the *higher way* of the two.

Men rush to California and Australia as if the true gold were to be found in that direction; but that is to go to the very opposite extreme to where it lies. They go prospecting farther and farther away from the true lead, and are most unfortunate when they think themselves most successful. Is not our *native* soil auriferous? Does not a stream from the golden mountains flow through our native valley? and has not this for more than geologic ages been bringing down the shining particles and forming the nuggets for us? Yet, strange to tell, if a digger steal away, prospecting for this true gold, into the unexplored solitudes around us, there is no danger that any will dog his steps, and endeavor to supplant him. He may claim and undermine the whole valley even, both the cultivated and the uncultivated portions, his whole life long in peace, for no one will ever dispute his claim. They will not mind his cradles or his toms. He is not confined to a claim twelve feet square, as at Ballarat, but may mine anywhere, and wash the whole wide world in his tom.

Howitt says of the man who found the great nugget which weighed twenty-eight pounds, at the Bendigo diggings in Australia: "He soon began to drink; got a horse, and rode all about, generally at full gallop, and, when he met people, called out to inquire if they knew who he was, and then kindly informed them that he was 'the bloody wretch that had found the nugget.' At last he rode full speed against a tree, and nearly knocked his brains out." I think, however, there was no danger of that, for he had already knocked his brains out against the nugget. Howitt adds, "He is a hopelessly ruined man." But he is a type of the class. They are all fast men. Hear some of the names of the places where they dig: "Jackass Flat"—"Sheep's-Head Gully"—"Murderer's Bar," etc. Is there no satire in these names? Let them carry their ill-gotten wealth where they will, I am thinking it will still be "Jackass Flat," if not "Murderer's Bar," where they live.

The last resource of our energy has been the robbing of graveyards on the Isthmus of Darien, an enterprise which appears to be but in its infancy; for, according to late accounts, an act has passed its second reading in the legislature of New Granada, regulating this kind of mining; and a correspondent of the *Tribune* writes: "In the dry season, when the weather will permit of the country being properly prospected, no doubt other rich *guacas* [that is, graveyards] will be found." To emigrants he says: "Do not come before December; take the Isthmus route in preference to the Boca del Toro one; bring no useless baggage, and do not cumber yourself with a tent; but a good pair of blankets will be necessary; a pick, shovel, and axe of good material will be almost all that is required"; advice which might have been taken from the "Burker's Guide." And